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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE NORTH VIETNAMESE CRISIS

Information as of 1000
14 AUGUST 1964

MORI

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL



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14 August 1964

SC No. 10471/64

C O N T E N T S

I. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

- A. North Vietnamese Military Activity**
- B. Chinese Communist Military Activity**

II. OTHER COMMUNIST REACTION

14 August 1964

SC No. 10471/64

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

MEMORANDUM: The North Vietnamese Situation

I. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AS OF 0900 HOURS, 14 August 1964

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A. North Vietnamese Military Activity

1. [REDACTED]

2. The 36 MIG fighters at Phuc Yen have still not been observed in any flight activity. Poor weather may be the primary explanation. The nationality of the pilots of these aircraft is still not known, [REDACTED]

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B. Communist Chinese Military Activity

1. No fighter or bomber moves associated with the North Vietnamese situation have been noted.

2. It was reported in the North Vietnam memorandum of 7 August that a few MIG-21's were probably operating in the south China area. Evidence which has just become available shows that this activity may have been going on since April, and is thus probably not related to the recent crisis. China is believed to have less than 20 of these high-performance supersonic fighters, most of which are based in the east China.

3. [REDACTED]

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II. OTHER COMMUNIST REACTION

A. Hanoi's alleged intentions in the event attacks on North Vietnam are "pressed" by the US or the South Vietnamese are contained in a 13 August article in a leading Japanese newspaper by Australian pro-Communist Wilfred Burchett.

B. An "immediate result", according to the article, will be the "military unification" of North Vietnam with the areas controlled by the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. Since US aircraft have been "using Laos" as a base for attacks on North Vietnam, the US will be considered as having created "a single military front" across Indochina. Creation of a single battlefield would remove the last "pretext" for the 100,000 Vietnamese veterans of the anti-French war--who have remained in training--to stay north of the 17th parallel. This parallel "could disappear overnight" in the event of new attacks on North Vietnam, the article declared. Burchett wrote that carrying the war to the north would also probably bring North Vietnamese "tanks, trucks, and modern weapons" to the Viet Cong.

C. Burchett allegedly got his information from telephone calls to Hanoi after the Tonkin Gulf events, and from prior conversations with top Hanoi officials. Burchett has taken a leading role in propagandizing the Communist side of the Vietnamese war and is known to enjoy close relations with the North Vietnamese officialdom. His remarks usually echo the general trends of Hanoi policy, but are often erroneous as to detail. In the present instance, Burchett's article is probably intended mainly as a scare item designed to inhibit Laotian and South Vietnamese cooperation with US policy in Indochina and as an unofficial answer to Saigon's "March North" talk.

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E. Chinese Communist propaganda continues to emphasize that the entire country is "ready" to "deal a telling blow to aggressors who dare to invade." Considerable publicity is being given to mobilization activities in South China. For example, the Chinese Communist news agency reported on 13 August that militia-men in Kwangtung Province have been holding large-scale military exercises and that militiamen in Yunnan and Kwangsi Provinces, "which share the same mountains and rivers with Vietnam", have been angrily demonstrating against the US and promising to support their Vietnamese brothers "at short notice."

F. This propaganda, like the widely publicized anti-US demonstrations which are still going on in China, is intended in part to raise fears abroad and generate international pressures on the US.

The series of special daily situation reports covering events in the North Vietnamese situation is discontinued with this memorandum. Further developments will be reported in regular CIA publications.

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